

Dam Assessment Team Advises on Iraqi Infrastructure

Using expertise gained on stateside U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dam and water resource projects, a seven-person dam assessment team from the Corps' Northwestern Division headquartered in Portland, OR, is conducting onsite inspections of 21 dams and other hydrological structures in Iraq related to hydropower generation. The team's findings have pinpointed repairs and corrective actions, and their recommendations have prioritized those that are most urgent.

"It's our mission to look at some of the more critical (dams) there to ensure they're safe to operate; and if not, we'll come up with a list of things we need to be accomplished to make them safe," said Don Chambers, a structural engineer in the Corps' Portland District and a member of the team. He added that dams and hydropower plants, like much of the infrastructure in Iraq, had been abandoned or poorly maintained.

The primary mission of the Army Corps of Engineers is to support the Army in peace and war. In carrying out this mission, the Corps is able to draw upon the specialized expertise of thousands of engineers and scientists in its ranks, most of them engaged in civilian-oriented activities.